

NEWS RELEASE

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Decatur Man Pleads Guilty to Illegal Dumping into the Sangamon River

Urbana, IL - Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, announced today that Ronald Mark Davenport, age 48, of 1768 Maple Avenue, Decatur, Illinois, pleaded guilty to illegal dumping of a pollutant into the Sangamon River, in violation of the federal Clean Water Act. Davenport entered his plea before Chief U.S. District Judge Michael P. McCuskey who scheduled sentencing for December 22, 2006.

Davenport, an employee and partner of Able One Sealcoating of Decatur, pleaded guilty to pumping more than 250 gallons of water from the Decatur Bulk Watering Station on September 19, 2004, into his tank truck to clean tar and chemicals. The company used a 1,000 gallon tank mounted on a pickup truck known as "Big Sue" to haul waterproof coatings to work sites. At that time, the tank contained an unknown quantity of tar and other toxic chemicals. Davenport admitted he then opened the tank drain and discharged at least 50 gallons of wastewater containing toxic pollutants into the water station's drain which was designed to direct water to the Sangamon River, approximately 100 yards from the water station.

U.S. Attorney Heaton said, "People who may be tempted to save money by dumping toxic chemicals into our water resources should be aware that this office will aggressively prosecute environmental violations."

U.S. Attorney Heaton commended the cooperative effort by the following investigative agencies: the Criminal Investigation Division of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Illinois EPA; the Decatur Police Department; and the City of Decatur. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy A. Bass.

The penalty for violating the Clean Water Act is up to three years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000.

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